

**Vietnam Shark Fin Trade Investigation**  
**23 July – 04 August 2014**



A shark has its fin removed with a knife in Da Nang fish market, Da Nang Province, Vietnam, 03 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

### **Findings**

- Vietnam is the number one re-export country for shark fin due to its low tax status with China.
- This is being capitalized on by Chinese traders working with their Vietnamese counterparts who use the Vietnamese diaspora network to supply shark fin from overseas to Vietnam for further re-export to China.
- Much shark fin from overseas comes into Vietnam in personal luggage carried by overseas Vietnamese.
- The main route for shark fin to China is through the border town of Mong Cai.
- Shark fin prices have dropped significantly due to the anti-corruption crackdown in China, however an emerging middle class of wealthy Vietnamese is acquiring a new taste for shark fin.
- The guitarfish shark species is being heavily overexploited and would benefit from CITES Appendix II listing.
- Han Thai is a major player in supplying shark fin from Vietnam to China.
- Shark fin is seen by the Vietnamese elite in the same category as pangolin and other exotic luxury wildlife food items.
- There is a lack of political will to tackle the shark fin problem. Authorities are lax, enforcement is nil.
- Haiphong was the historical shark fishing town in Vietnam until 1980's/1990's, but lost its status due to overfishing.
- Shark fisheries in Vietnam are now mainly concentrated from Vung Tau in the south to Da Nang in the middle of the country.
- Only one community still actively hunts sharks: Nghia An / Nghia Phu in Quang Ngai Province.
- At no stage throughout the investigation were fisheries inspectors seen during any port visits.
- More sharks would have been spotted in the landing ports if the investigation had been made during the main shark fishing season.
- Rampant trade in sea turtles also emerged as a major area of concern during the investigation.
- Manta rays are also being over-exploited.

[For the purposes of this investigation, the currency exchange rate is 21,000+/- Vietnamese Dong (VND) = US\$1.00 (USD)]



[Traveling north, cities underlined in red were surveyed between 24 July and 05 August 2014.]

## Vietnamese shark names

Shark Fin - Vi Ca Map  
Shark – mập  
Vi (South) / Vay (north) – fin  
Fish - ca  
Shark hunter slang for 'shark'- nham  
Blacktip reef shark – map den or nham den  
Guitarfish – giong  
Hammerhead shark – map cao  
Thresher shark – nham chuot (rough skin, mouse tail)  
Shortfin mako shark– map ngu (ngu is also mackerel, shortfin makos look like mackerel)  
Great white shark – map trang  
Fried shark – map lan

**06 May 2014 – GUANGZHOU, CHINA.**

Market.

## MARKET

Prior to the commencement of the investigation, several bags of shark fin spotted with the word 'Vietnam' or 'Vietnamese' on them, printed in English, Vietnamese or Chinese, in the main shark fin trading hub of XiDi Lu in Guangzhou, China.



Bags of shark fin from Vietnam, as can be gathered from the word for Vietnam printed on the side of the bag, are seen in XiDi Lu shark fin market, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China, 05 June 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

## 24 July 2014 - SAIGON, VIETNAM.

Markets.

Hotel.

Wholesale trader.

Street level shop.

Restaurants.

### MARKETS

Saigon has 24 districts with a major market in each one. Based on local knowledge, of those 24 markets it is estimated that there are only 10-12 markets in Saigon that sell shark fin. That estimate is based on the demand, affluence and ethnicity of each district's population.



A shark fin trader is seen in Binh Tay market, Saigon, Vietnam, 24 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

#### *Bentanh Market*

In down town area. Six kiosks selling shark fin.

- Trader: 'Chau' said "...the price of shark fin never goes down".

Source of shark fin: Vung Tau and Nha Trang.

2 million Dong (USD95) per Kg of processed shark fin.

500,000 Dong (USD24) for box of 200gm 'ready-to-cook' fully prepared shark fin with cartilage taken out (looks like glass noodles).

- Trader: 'Lien' said her main supplier is in Nha Trang.

Said price "rarely goes down", but willing to "offer discount on large orders".

**[Price list in photos – look for Vi Ca]**

#### *An Dong Market (smaller, cleaner)*

First of two major markets in Cholon (Chinatown). 10 kiosks selling shark fin.

**[Price list in photos – look for Vi Ca]**

*Binh Tay Market (larger, dirtier)*

Second of two major markets in Cholon (Chinatown). 7 kiosks selling shark fin.  
One trader said less mainland tourists coming to buy now due to tensions in South China Sea.  
**[Price list in photos – look for Vi Ca]**

**HOTEL**

*Bat Tat Hotel.*

Caters to mainland tour groups. General manager of the hotel restaurant said that his shark fin business is down by half since the tensions between China and Vietnam flared up in the South China Sea. Top price for shark fin is 345,000 Dong (USD16) +15% tax & service charge per bowl.

**WHOLESALE TRADER**

*Hai Tran*

Trader was suspicious, but told investigator that his main business is selling to China, although he also supplies a network of restaurants and street level retail shops and dried seafood kiosks in various district markets in Saigon. The tensions in the South China Sea have not affected his business. Mainland buyers are still ordering from him. He said his “business is still good”.

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

**STREET LEVEL SHOP**

*Bao Khang*

Third generation Chinese owner selling shark fin amongst other TCM, herbal medicinal and health products like Lingzhi mushroom, ginseng, bee propolis, tea and even pearls. Said could probably get rhino horn.

5.2 million Dong (USD243) per Kg of processed shark fin.

6.2 million Dong (USD290) per Kg of 'ready-to-cook' fully prepared shark fin with cartilage taken out (looks like glass noodles).

**RESTAURANTS**



Hostesses are seen at a shark fin restaurant in Saigon, Vietnam, 24 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

'Dai Khanh'

Shark fin and seafood restaurant. Medium range. Prices stable for last two years.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vi Ca]**

Top menu price for shark fin is 1.98 million Dong (USD90) +15% tax & service charge per bowl.

'Hoang Long' (English name: Dragon Court)

Chinese restaurant next to Opera in Saigon's most luxurious quarter. Medium range.

Prices stable for last three years. General manager thinks last price rise three years ago was due to decreasing supply, but also inflation.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vi Ca]**

Top menu price for shark fin is 1.28 million Dong (USD60) +15% tax & service charge per bowl.

'Yeebo'

Newly renovated chic-looking Chinese restaurant catering to sophisticated and luxe crowd, but also to a few gangster-looking customers with paid escorts. High end. Prices stable for last two years.

Offered to let us take photos of shark fin, will call.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vi Ca]**

Top menu price for shark fin is 1.78 million Dong (USD84) +17% tax & service charge per bowl.

**25 July 2014 - SAIGON, VIETNAM.**

Hotel.

Restaurant.

**HOTEL**

Lotte Legend Hotel

High end Chinese restaurant 'Crystal Jade Palace Restaurant' in this Korean-branded hotel serves the second most expensive shark fin soup in Saigon. Has won numerous awards.

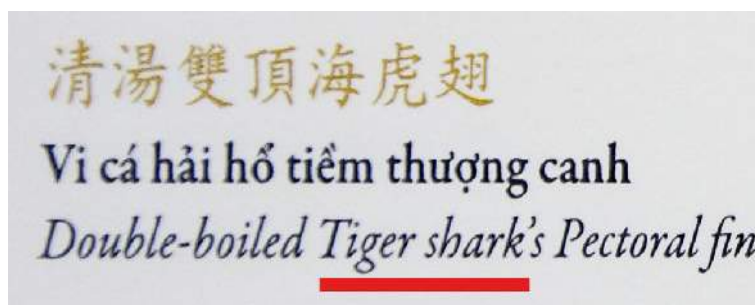
Top price for shark fin is 3.15 million Dong (USD148) per 100g +15% tax & service charge per bowl.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vi Ca]**

**RESTAURANT**

'Royal Pavillion'

Brand new (one month old) luxury shark fin and seafood restaurant in Times Square, in Saigon's Central Business District (CBD). Manager said it is the most expensive in town, and frequented by business people and government officials. Very high end. Top menu price for tiger shark pectoral fin is 3.318 million Dong (USD156) +15% tax & service charge per bowl. *If tax and service charge are included, at **USD172 per bowl**, this is the most expensive shark fin soup in Saigon, if not in the whole country.*



Tiger shark pectoral fin is seen on the menu at 'Royal Pavillion', Saigon's most expensive Chinese restaurant, Saigon, Vietnam, 25 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Times Square is owned and managed by Hong Kong developer Windsor Group. An un-named American man approached us who said he was the assistant of the Times Square owner, and they were doing an inspection of the property as it has just opened. Questioned what were we doing. We notified him of the tiger shark menu item, then he backed off. Before that, he then mentioned that the restaurant celebrity chef at 'Royal Pavillion' is Martin Yan from Hong Kong (of 'Yan Can Cook' TV cooking show fame).

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vi Ca]**

## **26 July 2014 – VUNG TAU, BA RI VUNG TAU PROVINCE, VIETNAM.**

Fish market.

Fishing Port.

Wet shark fin trader.

Store.

Vung Tau is located to the South of Saigon where the deep blue ocean waters of the South China Sea mix with the silty brown brackish waters of the Mekong river. As such it is an ideal hunting ground for sharks. Vung Tau is the closest coastal region to Saigon, and is a principal supply point for wet shark fins to be sent to processing facilities in Saigon, of which it is believed that there are at least three. Shark fins are dispatched around Vietnam by long distance bus, which act as cargo couriers. No passengers are necessary to accompany these shark fin packages. Vietnam's bus network is made up of private operators, but is regulated. Regulations apply to the maximum numbers of passengers allowed as well as different types of prohibited cargo (ie dangerous goods, endangered animals, live animals). Pricing is fixed by the government, with small local variations tolerated. Long distance routes make more money from cargo than from passengers. Traders prefer the bus network over the post office as it is cheaper and more reliable. The system based on trust, with often no questions asked. A small restaurant owner that serves duck in Vung Tau said that he used to be a fish trader twelve years ago and also worked for a fish processing company. Sometimes the shark body would arrive with no fins, but it was low value. He said there are less sharks now. A big seafood processing company in Vung Tau is BASEAFOOD. Vung Tau has a thriving petrochemical industry and has a heliport to serve the surrounding oil rigs. VietSovPetro, a joint venture between the Vietnam government and Russia's Zarubezhneft, is Vietnam's 5<sup>th</sup> largest company in Vietnam, and is headquartered in Vung Tau.

### **FISH MARKET**

#### *Ben Dinh Fish Market*

No sharks seen upon inspection.

#### *Cho Xom Luoi Retail Fish Market*

Two juvenile threshers seen at two separate market stalls. Both were selling the meat for 70,000 Dong (USD3.5) per Kg, (wholesale price from the fisherman is 35,000 Dong (USD1.63) per Kg).

### **FISHING PORT**

#### *Co Mat Fishing Port*

Sardines and mackerel. Supply still good. Met a lady who saw a 100 Kg big shark two days before.

#### *Ben Da Fishing Port*

Pair-trawler and bottom trawlers. Small mesh size nets.



A bigeye thresher shark, by-catch from bottom trawling, is seen at Ben Da Fishing Port, Vietnam, 26 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW



A bigeye thresher shark and a juvenile hammerhead shark, by-catch from bottom trawling, are seen at Ben Da Fishing Port, Vietnam, 26 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Saw two thresher sharks (Viet name: Nham Chuot [rough skin mouse tail]). One weighed 21 Kg sold for 35,000 Dong (1.63USD) per Kg = 735,000 Dong (USD34.50). One juvenile hammerhead shark. Various other juvenile sharks in a basket. One juvenile wobbegong. Lots of skates, rays and juvenile guitarfish (Vietnamese name: Giong). Snapper. Squid. Octopus. A few banded sea kraits (*Laticauda colubrina*), or black and white sea snakes. Many bags of mushed up tiny fish, crabs, shrimps and eels to be sold as pig feed. Mrs Thanh is the owner of a fleet of twenty fishing boats, her telephone number: 0908593452. She said that guitarfish was the most highly prized top tier shark fin, with a whole set of fins commanding upwards of 22 million Dong (USD1,032). One 'tak' (Vietnamese measurement unit) 20cm dorsal with tail and caudal = 4 to 5 million Dong (USD186 - USD233) and biggest set of three fins from guitarfish 40-50+ million Dong (USD1,860 – USD2,330+).

## WET SHARK FIN TRADER



Wall-mounted marine turtle trophies are seen at the home of Mrs Minh, a wet shark fin and seahorse trader, near Ben Da Fishing Port, Vietnam, 26 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

### *Mrs Minh (Tel: 0913863575)*

Mrs Minh's invited us to her home and adjacent shop. Her home has three large freezers, and her shop has five. Large quantities of seahorse were seen, some of which was being made into medicinal wine. Also makes wine from large sea snails, as well as from star fish and sea dragons. Nine sea turtle trophies (including two juveniles) were see mounted and displayed on facing walls which is illegal in Vietnam. Two large shark jaws were seen above the front door. Various other bits of endangered black coral and a few endangered nautilus shells adorned the room. Mrs Minh sells dried shrimps, shrimp paste and dried squid. But here main business is shark fin and seahorse. Mrs Minh's principal partner in Saigon is called Mrs Hue (wife) and Mr Hieu (husband) who are wet fin processors and distributors to wholesalers in Saigon. Mrs Hue's telephone number: 0947771786. Mr and Mrs Hue also export shark fin to Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Mr Hue brings the fins there himself, where he has a distribution network. Mrs Hue also sells dried/processed fins to Nha Trang, where there is great demand from the tourism industry. Three days before our visit, Mrs Minh sold three big bags of wet shark fins to a Mrs Hue, the trader from Saigon. However in a sign there are less sharks than before, Mrs Hue used to come five times a month, but now she only makes the journey twice a month. Mrs Minh said this was due to dwindling sharks stocks. In order to get more sharks, Mrs Minh told us that boats from Vung Tau now venture out illegally into Philippine and Indonesian waters to fish. They stay out for longer than before, averaging around two to three months. This is because there are less fish and sharks than in previous years. She said the profit yield has declined as fishermen now have to go further. And this year, the yield has dropped even more due to South China Sea tensions and fuel price hikes in Vietnam. Mrs Minh's husband said there are around 2,000 pairs of trawlers in Vung Tau, so that means around 4,000 individual boats. Mrs Minh said some shark hunters still in Phan Thiet.

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

## STORE

### 'Thanh Them' Ocean Trinkets store

Catering to tourists, this store in the downtown area was found to be illegally selling eight stuffed marine turtle trophies of different species, as well as bangles made from turtle shell. Black coral.

**27 July 2014 – VUNG TAU BA RI VUNG TAU PROVINCE, VIETNAM.  
PHAN THIET, BINH THUAN PROVINCE, VIETNAM.**

Shark fin processor.

Fishing boats.

Fishing port.

Restaurant owner.

## SHARK FIN PROCESSOR

### Mr Dang Khoi

Shark fin processor. Address: 49/14, Nguyen Binh Khiem (A25a), Vung Tau. Collects wet fins from people like Mrs Minh. Sells black tip reef shark, great white shark jaws and guitarfish fins by the set. His guitarfish shark fins were all caught locally in Vungtau. His main clientele is from China, but he also sells to Vietnamese traders from Saigon. Mr Khoi holds a Vietnamese government license for marine products processing. He has been in the business for thirty years. Was keen to get rid of his stock of 25-30 great white shark jaws as feels the Vietnamese authorities are clamping down on wildlife product trophies, and gave us a magazine article to prove it. He only sells jaws from 700 Kg+ sharks for USD800 per pair and was super careful about handling them. He said that if even one tooth was found to be missing it can depress the price sharply. Has some thirty year old ones. Said shark jaws can have some medicinal properties as well as be a lucrative investment. (<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/endangered-07222014134446.html>)



Mr Dang Khoi, shark fin processor, displays shark fin samples at his work place which also doubles as a purified bottled water distribution company, Vung Tau, Vietnam, 26 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Mr Khoi was selling 1 Kg top tier fish maw for sale for a staggering 155 million Dong (USD7,277).

He also had bags of shark fin samples. Refer to photos.

Price list: VD1 Blacktip reef shark: 24 million Dong (USD1,119) per Kg (Four fins)  
VT1 Guitarfish: Sold per set. The fins have less cartilage and much more meat and fibre and are thus much more valuable and attractive. Guitarfish can be chopped up and served in soup as slices or pieces. Because of this, guitarfish is the most highly prized top tier shark fin, with a set of three fins (dorsal, caudal, tail) commanding upwards of 22 million Dong (USD1,032).  
**Small** (one 'tak', Vietnamese measurement unit) 20cm = 4-5 million Dong (USD186-233) for set of three fins from guitarfish.  
**Medium**: 15-17 million Dong (USD700 - USD792) for set of three fins from guitarfish.  
**Large**: 40-50 million Dong (USD1,860 - USD2,330) set of three fins from guitarfish (for shark weighing 300-400 Kg).

He spoke about the shark fishing technique used for great whites used up until ten years ago. Fishermen used to use big metal hooks that are more commonly used for hauling burlap sacks. They caught herrings then used the herrings as bait to catch eels, then chopped up the eels to use as shark bait. They used stainless steel lines to reel in the great white sharks. But he said that many shark fishermen had given up this line of work as there are no more great white sharks off Vung Tau any more. Mr Khoi also runs a purified water bottle delivery company called 'Awardfresh'.

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

## **FISHING BOATS**

Fishing boats were seen leaving Vung Tau.



Fishing boats are seen in Vung Tau, Vietnam, 27 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

## FISHING PORT

### Loc An Fishing Port

Small fishing port on outskirts of Vung Tau. No shark, just crabs and shrimp and fish.

### Small fishing community 25 miles south of Phan Thiet

Small tented community of fishermen living on the sand dunes. Use basket boats, and only fish 2-3 miles offshore. Crab, shrimp, small fish. Young guy laughed when asked the question and said he had seen no sharks. Older guy said he had no shark sightings for years. Sandy bottom, no reef, maybe that's why, or it could be that there are now just less sharks to be encountered.

## RESTAURANT OWNER

A restaurant owner in Phan Thiet said the small offshore island Phu Quy is a famous shark catching island. Phu Quy island is 100 kms offshore from Phan Thiet. The shark hunters leave from Phu Quy for ten days to two weeks at a time.

**28 July 2014 – PHAN THIET, BINH THUAN PROVINCE, VIETNAM.  
NHA TRANG, KANH HOA PROVINCE, VIETNAM.**

Fishing port.  
Shark fin traders and processors.  
Market.

## FISHING PORT



Fishing boats are seen in Phan Thiet, Vietnam, 27 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

### Cho Ca Con Cha fishing port

Main fishing port in Phan Thiet. Mostly bottom trawlers, but one long liner. Lots of evidence of overfishing. No sharks. But previous week a 100 Kg guitarfish was landed, fetching 100 million

Dong (USD4,663). And previous day two great white sharks, 30 Kg each fetching 6 million Dong (USD280) per shark. Many juvenile fish and crustaceans of all descriptions. One marlin, two sailfish. Juvenile sailfish. Adult and juvenile mahi mahi. Squid, snapper, catfish, barracuda, wahoo, red snapper, herring, mackerel, eel, crabs, sea snail, octopus, various bait fish, tiger prawns, juvenile crabs and eels. Sometimes dolphins get caught in the net and die. Dolphin by-catch is sold to the Catholic community. Buddhists won't eat dolphin, not sure about the Communists.

**\*\* HUMAN RIGHTS ALERT \*\*** Child labour seen sorting out dead juvenile crabs and shrimps at 5am. One boy of around eight or nine, another younger girl looked six or seven years old.



A child worker sorts through small fish and crustaceans that have been fished by bottom trawling, at Phan Thiet's main fishing port of Cho Ca Con Cha, Vietnam, 28 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

## **SHARK FIN TRADERS AND PROCESSORS**

*Mr Hai Hien (Tel: 0909207799)*

Lives and works in Phan Thiet. Ex-shark hunter, born and resident of famous shark fishing island, Phu Quy. Now a shark fin trader. Used to fish for sharks around Phu Quy island, the Spratly Islands and Western Philippines until 1988. His record catch was in 1988 when he was sixteen years old. He caught 330 Kg of shark fins in just four nights at Phu Quy Island. Then, then due to the Chinese takeover of the Northern Spratly Islands in 1988 he went further afield to catch sharks off the reef off Malaysian Borneo near Brunei. He kept hunting until 1992 when shark stocks started to dwindle, and then he gave up entirely and moved off Phu Quy island to live in Pahn Thiet to open his seafood processing and trading company: Hai Hien Company Limited ([www.haihien.vn](http://www.haihien.vn)) He recently sold 10 Kg shark fin to Saigon. Like Mr Khoi in Vung Tau, he said that there are no longer any shark hunters in Phan Thiet, as they all gave up about a decade ago due to dwindling stocks. His timeframe corresponds exactly with Mr Khoi's account. He said there is very little shark fin supply in Phan Thiet because most shark hunters have given up the job including the experts from Phu Quy island, and he said it would not be worth visiting the island. He said that based on migratory patterns and the weather, the two shark fishing seasons are September/October and

March/April. When Mr Hien saw our 4x4 luxury seven seater he asked us to smuggle three sea turtles to his friend in Dong Da district, Hanoi, as it is no longer safe to send turtles by air or bus due to police and customs crackdowns. There are many police/customs checkpoints along National Route 1. The likely destination for the turtles is China. Sea turtles are no longer allowed to be shipped on Vietnam Airlines. *Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

Mr Thien and son. Tel: 0983752051

Lives and works in Phan Thiet. House next to port entrance. Runs a small scale operation. Had blue shark fin sample. Recently sent one shark fin to Canada via passenger luggage. Deals mostly in blue sharks, great whites, guitarfish and blacktips. Keeps stock at home and processes on rooftop. Said business is down due to Chinese market price slump due to government crackdown and shark fin bans. 1 Kg of blue shark fins last year was 9 million Dong (USD419), this year 7 million Dong (USD326). Son believes the industry's days are numbered. Gets sharks mostly from Spratly Islands. Fishermen now cut the fins, but also bring back bodies, unlike before. Shark meat can be sold for 30,000 Dong (USD1.40) per Kg, very cheap. The fishing fleet captains call him on their way back to port and he then picks up the shark fin when the boats arrive. He said his business was shrinking and his profits declining. He only ever has just a few Kg of wet fin to process, but recently he has nothing. *Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

**MARKET**

Cho Tam Phan Thiet market

Main market in Phan Thiet. No shark fins, but saw dried ray skins that had been finned.

TCM Shop in Nah Trang

Pangolin wine: 6 million Dong (USD280) for a bottle with a juvenile pangolin inside.  
Pangolin scales: 20 million per Kg (USD932) but did not show.

**29 July 2014 – NHA TRANG, KANH HOA PROVINCE, VIETNAM.**

Market.

Taxidermist / Illegal Wildlife Trader.

Vietnam Academy of Science & Technology, Institute of Oceanography, (C.I.T.E.S Scientific Authority of Vietnam).

Hotels.

Turtle Trader.

Wildmeat restaurant.

**MARKET**

Cho Dam Market.

Spoke to various traders. Surveyed the whole market. 54 kiosks in total. Who buys it? Everyone. The main market for shark fins in Nha Trang are locals and tourists who come from Vietnam and abroad. Witnessed a large number of Korean tourists passing through. This market is on the main tourist itinerary. All shark fin traders will provide a post-card sized set of instructions on how to cook shark fin soup. Fake shark fin is present at this market. *(After leaving Nha Trang, we found out that there are at least three luxury shark fin vendor shops in the city that could be surveyed.)*

Trader 1: Cuong Trang

Husband and wife couple. Wife told us that the amount of kiosks selling shark fin was 30, but we counted 54 which would indicate that the number has increased substantially since she last counted or was told the number of shark fin kiosks was 30. Said local Vietnamese ethnic Chinese favour

guitarfish, but are nowadays are too scared to travel around Vietnam due to potential persecution, dating back to the May 2014 anti-Chinese riots. Mainland tourists from China have also recently stopped visiting Nha Trang altogether. Said shark fin airline bans are affecting sales to overseas Vietnamese people who buy shark fin to bring back to their overseas Vietnamese communities.



Shark fins are seen in Cho Dam market, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 29 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Processed guitarfish fins = 13 million Dong (USD606) per Kg.  
Whole thresher shark fins = 1 million Dong (USD46) per Kg.  
Whole blacktip reef shark fins = 15 million Dong (USD700) per Kg.



Mrs. Truong, a dried marine produce trader displays shark fin in Cho Dam market, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 29 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Trader 2: *Kim Phung*

Had a big deal going on the back room and so had no time to speak to us in any depth.  
*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*



Shark fins are seen in Cho Dam market, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 29 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW



A shark fin trader indicates with her finger that the box of shark fins she is selling are caudal fins, Cho Dam market, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 29 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

## TAXIDERMIST / ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADER

Mr Mao. (Tel: 0905469142 / 01217176532). Address in photo records.

Mr Mao said his grandfather was a royal taxidermist and had stuffed the King of Vietnam's elephant. He does 20-30 taxidermies per month, and says it takes him a three week turnaround. Doesn't hold much stock as people come to him to taxidermy their dead wildlife.

Offered small crocodile said to be wild from Mekong delta. Refer to audio recording for price. Illegally offered 30.5cm hawksbill turtle for sale for 2.5 million Dong (USD117) . Smelt fresh. Turtles are priced on the diameter of the shell, @ 750,000 Dong (USD35) per 10cm.



An illegal wildlife trader and taxidermist shows an illegal marine turtle trophy, near the main market in Nha Trang, Vietnam, 29 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Had elephant knee bone which he said was seventy years old for sale for 5 million Dong (USD233). Was also selling 'gow' a sticky black block-looking Chinese medicine wrapped in plastic taken from fridge made from monkey and python (possibly from two species protected in Vietnam), 1 million Dong (USD46) per 100 gm. He insisted that he is just a processor and a taxidermist, not poacher. *Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

**VIETNAM ACADEMY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**  
**INSTITUTE OF OCEANOGRAPHY**  
**(C.I.T.E.S. SCIENTIFIC AUTHORITY OF VIETNAM)**

Website: [www.vnio.org.vn](http://www.vnio.org.vn)

Met with the Director: Ass. Prof. Dr. Bui Hong Long  
Director Long referred us to Vice Director Ass. Prof. Dr. Vo Si Tuan and Dr Vo Van Quang, Chief of the Marine Invertebrates Department (scientist). Two scientific papers were obtained.

*Vice Director Ass. Prof. Dr. Vo Si Tuan*

Elder man. Seemed guarded at first, but main thing he said was that “sharks are overexploited in Vietnam.”

*Dr Vo Van Quang (scientist)*

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=Dr Quang is a younger man worth keeping in touch with. Quite forthcoming. Gave us a tour of the marine samples and blacktip shark “breeding program”. Told us that Tam Quang Bac, Binh Dinh province, is the main location for shark fin drying. Said he used to know two shark processors in Nha Trang, but that they have both gone out of business. He said the two main places for shark processing in Vietnam are Saigon and Binh Dinh. Said all the traders at Cho Dam market source mainly from Binh Dinh, but also from Saigon. Said the 12 common shark species to the area (Phan Rang, Phan Thiet, Vung Tau, Con Dao and Camao) are; shortfin mako, spottail shark, Japanese spurdog, scalloped hammerhead, pigeye shark, whitetip reef shark, common thresher shark, graceful shark, silky shark, great white shark, lematius shark and spinner shark. Quang also said the three most overexploited sharks are; the guitarfish, the great white shark and the hammerhead shark, as they are all very rare and very expensive.

*Two Scientific Paper Abstracts*

**1) SPECIES COMPOSITION AND DISTRIBUTION OF SHARKS IN QUY NHON BAY AND NEIGHBORING WATERS**

*Vo Van Quang, Vo Si Tuan, Le Thi Thu Thao, Tran Cong Thinh, Nguyen Phi Uy Vu, Le Minh Phuong*

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**Abstract:** Based on the collection including 52 samples collected during February 2010 – December 2011 in Quy Nhon bay and neighboring waters, 12 species belonging to 7 genera, 6 families, 4 orders of sharks (Selachii) were identified. The ground sharks (Carcharhiformes) was most diverse with seven species recorded, followed by the mackerel sharks (Lamniformes) with 3 species. The dogfish sharks (Squaliformes) and carpet sharks (Orectolobiformes) included 1 species for each. The thresher *Alopias vulpinus* (Bonnaterre, 1788) were newly recorded for Viet Nam waters. The initiative surveys on their distribution indicated that whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*), thresher shark (*Alopias vulpinus*), shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) live offshore and rarely observed nearshore. The spinner sharks (*Carcharhinus brevipinna*) and blacktip reef shark (*Carcharhinus limbatus*) would live in the continental shelf and appear nearshore seasonally. Only juvenile of the silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) and

scalloped hammerhead (*Sphyrna lewini*) were caught in nearshore waters. It was assumed that the pigeye (*Carcharhinus amboinensis*), spottail (*Carcharhinus sorrah*) and Japanese spurdog (*Squalus japonicus*) locate around the islands and outside the bay. The gracefull shark (*Carcharhinus amblyrhynchoides*) distributes widely inside and outside the bay and around the neighbouring islands. Given that an individual of the great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) was caught in unhealthy status, it would be remove this from the list of shark in Quy Nhon bay and neighbouring waters.

2) Exploitation of Resources of Marine Sharks in the waters from Quang Ngai to Binh Thuan Provinces  
*Nguyen Van Long, Vo Si Tuan (2012)*

## **EXPLOITATION OF RESOURCES OF MARINE SHARKS IN THE WATERS FROM QUANG NGAI TO BINH THUAN PROVINCES**

**NGUYEN VAN LONG, VO SI TUAN**

*Summary: Studies on exploitation of marine sharks were conducted by interview and consultation with local fishing villages in six provinces including Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan. A total of 180 fishers of some major fishing gears were interviewed and consulted in 2010 and 2011. Results from interview and consultation show that there were 530 boats fished marine sharks with the highest number being found in Binh Thuan (181 boats), Binh Dinh (140 boats), Khanh Hoa (98 boats), Phu Yen (74 boats), Quang Ngai (32 boats) and Ninh Thuan (5 boats). There were six major fishing gears to fish marine sharks (shark longline fishing, tuna longline fishing, purse seine and hookah diving) at 3 major fishing grounds: 1) the coastal waters of Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh and Phu Yen; 2) the area surrounding Bo Kham - Spratly island - offshore Vung Tau; and 3) the area adjacent to Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia with the major fishing season occurred from February to October. A total of 13 species of marine sharks were caught with mean catch per boat of shark longline fishing being highest (0.53 ton/boat/month), purse seine (0.50 ton/boat/month) and tuna longline fishing (0.18 ton/boat/month), of which *Alopias pelagicus* and *Sphyrna lewini* were dominant. In 2010, total catch was about 1,130 tons/year, with the highest being recorded to sharks longline fishing (1,126 tons/year). Some major provinces supported higher catch were Binh Thuan (886 tons/year), Binh Dinh (201 tons/year) and Phu Yen (186 tons/year). In general, there was a decline in number of fishing boats (from 16.7 to 85.8%), catch per boat (from 14.4 to 83.8%) and total catch (from 58.4 to 99.4%) of each fishing gear between the period of 10 years before and 2010 in each province. This indicates that resources of marine sharks were over-exploited, especially in the coastal waters of Vietnam.*

**Ngày nhận bài:** 28 - 2 - 2012

**Người nhận xét:** PGS.TS. Nguyễn Hữu Phụng

## HOTELS

The four following luxury hotels in Nha Trang were surveyed for shark fin soup.

### InterContinental, Nha Trang

This hotel is a managed property, and is not owned by Intercontinental Hotels Group. Shark fin is available at the contemporary western-style restaurant in the hotel called 'Costa Seafood', which is owned by a Hong Kong Chinese.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vi Ca]**

Top menu price for shark fin is 1 million Dong (USD46) + 15% tax & service charge per bowl.



The concierge of the InterContinental Hotel in Nha Trang displays a menu containing shark fin available at the hotel restaurant, 'Costa Seafood', Nha Trang, Vietnam, 29 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

### Ana Mandara Resort, Nha Trang

No shark fin

### Best Western Havana Hotel, Nha Trang

No shark fin

### Sheraton Hotel, Nha Trang

No shark fin.

## TURTLE TRADER

Seen in front of Cho Dam market. Five turtles of different sizes for sale illegally on the wall inside the shop, and two small ones on display the street at the front of the shop. These turtles were found to be cheaper than illegal wildlife trader Mr Mao.

15cm = 1 million Dong (USD46).

19cm = 1.5 million Dong (USD69).

## WILDMEAT RESTAURANT

### 'Hai Minh'

Manager (Mr Hai Tel: 0908010912)

Had six snakes. Also serves wild boar, porcupines, mongoose, squirrels freshwater turtles. Could get pangolins on demand, but need half day advance order with a deposit. 5.5 million Dong (USD256) per Kg. Pangolin weight is 4-5 Kg suitable for four to six people.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vi Ca]**

Top menu price for shark fin is 88,000 Dong (USD4.10) + 15% tax & service charge per bowl.

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

**30 July 2014 – NHA TRANG, KANH HOA PROVINCE, VIETNAM.  
TUY HOA, PHU YEN PROVINCE, VIETNAM.**

Fishing port.

Market.

Processor.

Medicated wine.

## FISHING PORT

### Hon Ro Fishing Port – Nha Trang

Nha Trang's main fishing port. Smaller than Phan Thiet, but more sharks. Also mackerel and some unidentified small fish and squid.

Fishing boat owner's telephone number in Nha Trang: Mr Trong +84 983799909.



A dead hammerhead shark is grabbed by a fisherman on the dock at Hon Ro fishing port, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 30 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

1 x hammerhead shark (1.5 metre length) 80,000 Dong (USD3.73) per Kg meat. Fisherman wouldn't disclose the value of the fins, but said they were expensive.



A dead hammerhead shark is grabbed by a fisherman on the dock at at Hon Ro fishing port, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 30 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW



A dead hammerhead shark is seen on the dock at Hon Ro fishing port, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 30 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

2 x silky sharks (1 metre length) 40,000 Dong (USD1.87) per Kg meat, price of fins withheld.  
2 x unidentified species (but probably silky sharks) 40,000 Dong (USD1.87) per Kg meat, price of fins withheld.

1 x big eye thresher 40,000 Dong (USD1.87) per Kg meat, price of fins withheld.  
1 x short fin mako 40,000 Dong (USD1.87) per Kg meat, price of fins withheld.



With its teeth set removed, a dead shortfin mako shark is seen at Hon Ro fishing port, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 30 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

8 x manta rays (80-85 Kg each) 200,000 Dong (USD9.33) for 1 Kg gills, 40,000 Dong (USD1.87) per Kg meat. Bones said to be of high value but workers didn't know price. Processed gills cost 'a few million Dong' (1 million dong = USD46), sold to China. Fisherman said they retain stomach sashimi and breast fillets sashimi as an 'exotic food' delicacy to be served with local rice wine.



Fishermen haul dead manta rays onto the dock at Hon Ro fishing port, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 30 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW



Fishermen haul a dead manta ray onto the dock at Hon Ro fishing port, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 30 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW



A worker butchers a dead manta ray on the dock at Hon Ro fishing port, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 30 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Gill processing done locally in Nha Thrang. Meat was loaded onto small truck to be sold in local markets and also packed as frozen salted fillets for distribution. Manta ray meat has become a food staple for poor fisherman and farmers.



Manta rays are butchered for their gill rakers, used in pseudo-Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as a bogus cure for asthma, on the dock at Hon Ro fishing port, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 30 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW



Manta rays are butchered for their gill rakers, used in pseudo-Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as a bogus cure for asthma, on the dock at Hon Ro fishing port, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 30 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

The gills are dried then shipped to China for use in bogus Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).



Manta rays are butchered for their gill rakers, used in pseudo-Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as a bogus cure for asthma, on the dock at Hon Ro fishing port, Nha Trang, Vietnam, 30 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

All species observed landed were fished in waters offshore Vung Tau on an eight day fishing trip. The fishing boat will go back out immediately for another eight day fishing trip. The first mate said in winter, from October to March, the rough seas send them past the Vietnamese oil rigs further south to Malaysia, where they steal fish. They said they have to keep an eye out for the Malaysian navy and coast guard and have to flee when they arrive. The already finned bodies of bigeye thresher shark, silky sharks and other unidentified sharks were seen on the dock, as they had been finned at sea. Hammerhead shark, silky shark and short fin mako shark were landed with fins attached, but later placed into cold storage due to suspicions about our presence. Port security alerted traders not to fin sharks in front of us to avoid scandal, as they were concerned about recent negative publicity surrounding hygiene conditions in catfish (*Pangasus*) fisheries in Ca Mau in the Mekong Delta at southern tip of Vietnam.

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

## **MARKET**

### *Central Market of Tuy Hoa City*

One store only selling low grade shark fin 50,000 Dong (USD2.33) per 50 grammes small packet (weight of instant noodles). Looked fake or mixed with other stuff, 2 million Dong (USD93) per Kg.

## SHARK FIN PROCESSOR



A shark fin processing factory is seen in Tuy Hoa, Phu Yen, Vietnam, 30 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

*Mrs Kin of 'Yen Sao Thien Hoang' (Tel: 090 549 7088 / 057 3550102)*

*Address: Phu Loc. Fishing port of ward 8, Tuy Hoa, Phu Yen Province, Vietnam.*

Mrs Kin has a shop in town selling shark fin, birds nest and ginseng. Her workshop has six drying racks with fans and light bulbs. Takes about 12 hours to dry one batch. Uses chemical agents, garlic and ginger to clean the fins. Processing facility had a box of 4.5 Kg @ 7million Dong (USD326) per Kg, refer to photo. Mrs Kin sells to three high quality vendors in Nha Trang, (though not in the market we visited) and to Saigon through middle man. Retail shop in Tuy Hoa centre has shark fin for 16 million Dong (USD746) per Kg, (in 1.6 million Dong (USD75) per 100 gramme packets). Mrs Kin has a small workshop near the port employing four girls, including her daughter. There are many processors like Mrs Kin in Phu Yen Province, all doing the same thing and operating indoors. She said that indoor drying is better as the shark fin is less likely to become contaminated by dust and sand. First she uses warm water to scrape off the skin. Some processors use cleaning fluid for a whole night, but she said she only uses chemicals for a maximum of five minutes to make the colour lighter. She was uncomfortable to admit this, yet emphasized the short duration of her chemical process and that her shark fin is of the best quality. Mrs Kin said the chemicals are used at the request of the vendors in Nha Trang. She also uses ginger and garlic and warm water to kill fishy smell (and the chemical agents). She only admitted use of chemicals when we queried the varied colour between her two products (white versus yellow). Mrs Kin said all the processors in her area all sell to Nha Trang and Saigon, and never sell to China and Hong Kong. She and other processors have to pay money in advance to brokers who collect wet fins from the fishermen during the catching season (October to March). Whenever a broker has wet fins they call her and other processors, but this depends on how many fins the broker collected. One time she paid from 50 million to more than 120 million to a broker so that she can ensure stock. The price on account is usually more during the season. Whenever she has fins in store she tries to sell them as soon as possible so that can she can put money back on account with the broker.



A shark fin processing factory with lights and fans to dry fresh shark fin is seen in Tuy Hoa, Phu Yen, Vietnam, 30 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Her dried fins did not smell at all. Mrs Kin said the beautiful presentation is for retail use, and the mixed jumbled shark fin is for wholesale to restaurants. Returning to the issue of chemicals, Mrs Kin said she doesn't use chemicals if the fins are destined for a restaurant or if there is no need for aesthetics. Mrs Kin's shark fin is a mixed of everything, except guitarfish. She had in stock the processed dried fins of great white shark, blacktip reef shark, thresher shark and hammerhead shark.



Mrs Kin, a shark fin processor, displays different kinds of processed and unprocessed shark fin in her factory in Tuy Hoa, Phu Yen, Vietnam, 30 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Two tiers:

Top tier:	<u>Level 1:</u>	18m Dong (USD839) per Kg (from large fin with more thinner and longer threads.)
	<u>Level 2:</u>	14m Dong (USD652) per Kg.
	<u>Level 3:</u>	12m Dong (USD560) per Kg.
Second tier:		7 million Dong (USD326) per Kg.

Mrs Kin said she could sell us a ½ Kg sample of 12 million Dong (USD560) per Kg and a ½ Kg sample of 14 million Dong (USD652) per Kg by paying a deposit of 13 million Dong (USD606) and then pay the rest later. She said Tuy Hoa port is out of season right now. No sharks. The port only operates 5am to 6am, just small coastal fisheries, squid, small fish etc. But she can guarantee that wet fins are very available in Phu Yen in the season. She also said that the supply is stable from brokers for years, but that the price for wet fins is falling. Out of season she usually gets her supply from Binh Dinh province. If she has a big order she can borrow from dried fins other processors at a commission. Finally, she said that in general the turnover is down since three years ago, but didn't know why.

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

**MEDICATED WINE**

Many shops selling various seahorse and other ocean species 'Ruou Thuoc' medicated wine being sold at rest stops on highway going north near border of Phu Yen Province and Binh Dinh Province. There are many versions in Vietnam including 'mountain' and 'ocean'. Average bottle is 2-3 litre for 500,000 Dong (USD24). Should be mixed with 5 litres of rice wine. Caters to tourists on the road. In the 'ocean' variety, species, some of whom are endangered, include: seahorse, sea snakes, sea dragon, gecko, ginseng, red dates, sea cucumber, honeycomb, blackbird, abalone, starfish, sea leeches (nudibranch?), but usually only six at a time. Grouper mariculture farm at back of shop.



A medicated wine 'ruou thuoc' seller is seen by the side of Route 1 national road going north on the border of Phu Yen and Binh Dinh Provinces, Vietnam, 30 July 2014. Many shops sell seahorse and other ocean species in their version of 'Ruou Thuoc' medicated wine at rest stops on the highway. There are various versions of medicated wine in Vietnam which include the 'mountain' and 'ocean' varieties. In the 'ocean' variety, the species steeped in liquor, some of which are endangered, include; seahorse, sea snakes, sea dragon, gecko, ginseng, red dates, sea cucumber, bee honeycomb, black bird, abalone, starfish, and nudibranch, but usually one bottle only contains six species at a time.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

## **31 July 2014 – QUY NHON, BINH DINH PROVINCE, VIETNAM.**

Market.

Main port of Quy Nhon.

Fishing port.

Wet shark fin broker.

Shark fin processor.

Restaurants.

### **MARKET**

#### **Quy Nhon Central Market**

Three shops (one in the market itself, two outside) selling shark fin of low quality.

Only one shop surveyed, 'Thuy Trinh'. (The other shop is called 'Tien'.)

Shark fin looked heavily bleached. Two kinds of shark fin for sale in 'Thuy Trinh':

Cuoc Vi Ca Map (threads, box of round ones): 700,000 Dong (USD33) for 150 gm.

Cuoc Vi Ca Map (threads, box of straight one): 900,000 Dong (USD42) for 100 gm.

### **MAIN PORT OF QUY NHON**

Witnessed tropical timber from Laos being loaded on to a Chinese vessel: 'Kai Ki'.

### **FISHING PORT**

#### **Cang Ca Quy Nhon**

No sharks seen. Distant water fishing fleet no longer leaving Quy Nhon due to South China Sea tensions. Staff at ship chandler / fishing supplies store in the port said that in order to find sharks the boats now have to go as far as Philippines and Malaysia. Sometimes the Chinese navy or coast guard would arrest Vietnamese crew, bring them to Hainan Island in China, and confiscate their fishing gear and catch as well as make them pay a fine for release. So they prefer not to run the risk. It was confirmed that no distant water fishing boats would return to Quy Nhon during our stay.

### **WET SHARK FIN BROKER**

Mrs Bong, a wet shark fin broker gave us the contact details of two processors in Quy Nhon.

Mrs Bong's phone number: (Tel: 0974051299)

1. Processor: Mrs Ly (Tel: 0986638635) Add: No 42 Le Van Huu Street, (near fishing port).

2. Another processor we did not contact: Mrs Nu: (Tel :0935058497) Address: No23, Huynh Thi Dao Street, Vo Thi Sau ward, Nhon Bing District, Quy Nhon.

### **SHARK FIN PROCESSOR**

Mrs Ly (Tel: 0986638635) Add: No 42 Le Van Huu Street, (near the fishing port).

A very friendly 62 year old lady has been in the shark fin processing business for many years. Said there are two to three shark fin processors in Quy Nhon. She also runs a birds nest business, which is now in fact her main business. Her business partner has already retired. She gets frozen fins from the brokers who get them straight off the boats in Quy Nhon port. She can obtain wet fins from the brokers every day, and spends between 1-2 million Dong (USD46 - USD93) per day. After collecting fins for five to ten days, she spends one day processing them. Business used to be very profitable but is less so now. Her business started to decline three years ago, but she keeps going despite her age because the wet fin brokers keep coming to her and so do her clients. However, she doesn't chase business and is not aggressive in the market any more.



Unprocessed shark fin is seen on the table at the home of a shark fin processor, Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam, 31 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Mrs Ly's nicely decorated big house with is located in a slum area but stands out as the richest on the street. She has working area at the back of her house, which backs out onto the small port. Her sister-in-law is employed to do the actual processing, and was pre-processing a thresher shark fin when we arrived. First they clean the fin, then they remove the skin, cartilage and meat, and then they put it in the freezer until they get an order from a buyer. She had several plastic bags full of pre-processed shark fins in her freezer. After pre-processing, if an order is placed she removes the fins from the freezer and starts the final-processing stage which is to 'pick up the threads'. She does the drying on the roof of her house. When she was young she was a broker and a processor and would visit the port at 3am to source the best wet fins for herself to process, but also to buy wet fins to sell to others for a commission. She would compete for the best price from the fishermen with other brokers for the wet fins that would arrive in abundance. Fifteen years ago one boat would arrive with about 200 to 300 million Dong (USD9,326 – USD13,989) worth of shark fin. Today those figures adjusted for 35% inflation are 450 to 700 million Dong (USD20,984 – USD32,642).)

Two tiers:

Top tier:	<u>Level 1:</u>	Cannot confirm the price until fin is in hand. Depends on supply and quality.
	<u>Level 2:</u>	Cannot confirm the price until fin is in hand. Depends on supply and quality.
Second tier:	<u>Level 3:</u>	10m Dong (USD466) per Kg 7 million Dong (USD326) per Kg.

Mrs Ly once had a client from Taiwan called Mr Kin for four years who had a cement business in Quy Nhon, and who ran a side business selling processed shark fin to China. Each time she would sell to him 10 Kg to 20 Kg per deal. This would represent a month of processing. She would send the processed fins by bus to Mong Cai which is on the border with China, or if urgently needed, she



Fresh shark fin is processed in the yard of a shark fin processor, Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam, 31 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

could send by express mail using the Post Office. Mr Kin has a helper in Mong Cai who helps bring the fins into China. Like the fins in Tuy Hoa, her dried shark fin does not smell at all. She uses rice wine and ginger. The by-products of the process are also sold. The cartilage is processed using bicarbonate of soda, then dried. She sells the cartilage to China for 100,000 Dong (USD4.66) per Kg, where it is powdered to be used in glucosamine sulphate / chondroitin health supplements for joint pain. Local Vietnamese elderly people eat the cartilage with formula milk as a cure for arthritis, back problems, brittle bone disease, joint problems. The shark skin is chopped up and deep fried to make a local snack delicacy. It is sold raw for 800,000 Dong (USD37) per Kg, and deep-fried for 1 million Dong (USD46) per Kg. She sells dry tails to Saigon for a commission through brokers. Tails command higher price. She recently acquired a set of guitarfish fins which she sold to a local rich Vietnamese for 5 to 6 million Dong (USD233 – USD279). Mrs Ly said locals prefer “*top quality*” guitarfish and hammerhead shark fins as they are rare on the market and as such are presented as “*something that money can't buy*”. Mrs Ly often sells to officials who use the the rare fins as gifts to superiors to bribe their way up the career ladder, and sometimes they purchase for self-use. She said the high season for hunting sharks in Binh Dinh province is February to June, but many shark hunters in Quy Nhon have given up due to the overexploitation of sharks in Vietnam waters. She said they have to go much further, to Malaysia or the Philippines, to catch sharks. Mrs Ly said a few shark hunters remain in the villages to the north such as Hoai Huong, Sa Huynh, Tam Quang Nam and Tam Quang Bac. Mrs Ly has a cousin called Mrs Hue in Tam Quang Bac who still processes. Her other cousin used to process shark fin in Hoai Huong commune, but has recently switched to birds nest business as shark fin business not so profitable any more. Now they have an indoor birds nest factory. Mrs Ly also had a very expensive ornamental piece of endangered iron wood in her home.

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

## RESTAURANTS

### 'Seagull Hotel' Restaurant

Three star hotel catering to Vietnamese and French tourists.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vi Ca]**

Top menu price for shark fin is 60,000 Dong (USD2.8) per bowl *inclusive* of 10% tax & service charge.

### 'Saigon Quy Nhon Hotel' hotel restaurant (in Saigon Tourist government-run hotel)

Four star hotel catering to business travelers and tourists.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vi Ca]**

Top menu price for shark fin is 79,000 Dong (USD3.68) per bowl inclusive of 10% tax & service charge. Had two illegal marine turtle trophies on the wall of this *government-run* restaurant.

### 'Hai Nam 2' Restaurant

Most expensive and luxurious seafood restaurant in Quy Nhon located on beach front Xuan Dieu.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vi Ca]**

Top menu price for shark fin is 120,000 Dong (USD5.6) per bowl inclusive of 10% tax & service charge. There are two 'Hai Nam' restaurants in Quy Nhon and we visited the second, newer one.

The restaurant also serves exotic species, including snake, fresh water turtle (*Ba Ba*) and stone fish (*Tom Tich*) 950,000 Dong (USD44) per Kg. Their main selling point is that they use wet fins not dry fins in their shark fin soup. The chef showed us great white shark, thresher and blacktip reef shark fins in his freezer. 10 bowls of soup can be cooked with one shark fin. High margins.



The chef of 'Hai Nam 2' seafood restaurant displays frozen shark fin used for making shark fin soup, Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam, 31 July 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Mr Si is restaurant manager. He can prepare as much exotic high end luxury shark fin as we want. Said fresh shark fin soup tastes better than shark fin soup from processed fins. VIP guests include businessmen, local officials and visiting politicians to Quy Nhon. High ranking officials are treated

with shark fin at this restaurant. Sometimes officials buy luxury seafood items from the tank to take home as gifts, or to eat at home. Shark fin soup is a top seller on the menu. Mr Si also has a South Korean client who is looking to import shark fin from him and he is currently exploring options on how to send shark fin to South Korea. He said he was aware of the airline bans, as Korean Airlines is shark free, but Vietnam Airlines is still not shark free.

### **01 August 2014 – TAM QUANG BAC, BINH DINH PROVINCE, VIETNAM.**

Shark fin processor (with information on major players in the trade).

*Tam Quang Bac is a small town with a distant water fishing fleet of around 200 boats. Was important shark fishing port, but now it is in decline. There was no sharks to be seen in the port as the distant water fishing fleet is still at sea. Every month, five days before the full moon, the distant water fishing fleet return and the harbour can be full. However upon our visit, we were still at half moon waxing, ie we were a few days too early. The next full moon will be on 10 August. The peak time on the river is three days before full moon, ie 07 August. Fishing boats come back normally five days before the full moon and go back out fishing again three or four days after the full moon.*

### **SHARK FIN PROCESSOR**

*Processor: Mr and Mrs Hue (Tel: 0983892529) Add: Thienh Chanh Commune, Tam Quang Bac village, Hoai Nhon District, Binh Dinh Province. Ask for exact house of Mr Hue at Hoang Bien Hotel, as no house number or street name. Mrs Hue is the cousin of Mrs Ly in Quy Nhon. Says there are only two or three processors in Tan Quang Bac. Has been in business for many years. She is the main one, but there are other smaller ones that produce low quality shark fin to supply to bakeries (eg to put in mooncakes for mid-Autumn festival).*



Mrs Hue, a shark fin processor, shows off her stock of frozen shark fin at her home in Tam Quang Bac, Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam, 01 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Mrs Hue said in general there are not enough sharks, and that most distant water fishermen in Tam Quang Bac have switched to targeting mackerel. She also said that the bans in Western countries have affected the price a lot. She and her husband Khoi have switched their main source of income from sharks to squid three years ago. They now process around 20 tonnes of squid a month for the local market and export to China. However she still collects wet fins to freeze, then pre-processes into dry fins to sell to her main buyer in Saigon named Mr Ha. She said Mr Ha is the biggest Vietnamese shark fin dealer in Vietnam, but there is another man from mainland China, who is an even bigger player. Mr Ha is the number two in the shark fin industry in Vietnam, and we later found out that his company name is '*Han Thai*'. The Chinese 'Mr Big' does not process shark fins, he just exports dried fins to China. The Chinese man has a Vietnamese wife who is from Tien Giang province in the Mekong delta and another Chinese wife and children living in China. Mr Ha has never told Mrs Hue his name. She said that after the Chinese man went back to China for Chinese New Year he never came back. Mr Hue said it was possibly due to the tensions between Vietnam and China. She thinks he could be afraid of violence or business politics. However his wife is still active in the market.



Mrs Hue, a shark fin processor, shows off her stock of processed shark fin at her home in Tam Quang Bac, Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam, 01 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

The translator had conversation with Mr Ha of '*Han Thai*'. Sounding guarded, he told the translator that he sources shark fin from all over Vietnam and processes at his premises, however how disclosed his address and phone number because he was speaking from Mrs Hue's phone. Mrs Hue said Mr Ha has a large network of wet fin brokers all over South Vietnam, including Nah Trang, Phan Thiet and Vung Tau. Mrs Hue is one of his many wet fin brokers that he buys from. Mrs Hue sells wet and processed fins to Mr Ha, but also keeps back some processed stock to sell herself. He uses the public bus network for logistics. Hue and her husband emphasized several times that Mr Ha is very big player in the market and has all kinds of fins for sale. He has shark fin

available of all tiers; cheap, medium, high end, and of the processed and unprocessed variety. Mr Ha collects the fins during the busy shark hunting season. He then exports and retails at other times of the year. Mrs Hue emphasized that Mr Ha could guarantee a stable price because he had enough money to collect fins when the price was low to sell them later. Acting as a shark fin commodity trader, Mr Ha can effectively guarantee price stability by manipulating the supply and the quality of fins that he releases to, or withholds from, the market. He is very wealthy and controls the market price by releasing fins when supply is tight, and buying fins at a low price during the shark harvesting season. Mrs Hue said that Mr Ha has the financial capacity to collect tens of billions of Dong's worth of shark fins during the season for freezing (10 billion Dong = USD466,000). We suspect from her comments, but are not sure, that Mr Ha has a refrigerated truck that travels up and down the coast of Vietnam buying wet fins from the brokers.

Mr Ha has many clients in China. After processing in Saigon, Mr Ha sends his dried fins to China via Mong Cai on the Chinese border with Guangxi province. Mr Ha also has a side business supplying dried fins to restaurants Saigon. Mrs Hue said her annual budget for wet fins can be around one or two billion Dong (USD46,632 – USD93,264), but Mr Ha's budget can run in to tens of billions of Dong (10 billion Dong = USD466,000).

Mr Ha was born in Tam Quang Bac and is married to a Vietnamese ethnic Chinese lady. He processes on the third floor of his facility in Saigon which we later visited. In the wake of the Mekong catfish scandal in the media, she said Mr Ha recently had a visit from food hygiene inspectors under the Vietnamese Ministry of Health due to food hygiene concerns at his shark fin processing factory. Mrs Hue also phoned another processor called Mrs Ba to see if she was processing so we could take pictures, but she was not, due to the rain. Rainy season in Vietnam is from May to October. Mrs Hue said she does not use any chemicals in her production.

She said no one hunts sharks exclusively any more in Tam Quang Bac. Any sharks that are caught are caught as by-catch only. Until three years ago during hunting season they could collect between one to two tons of fins per month. The recent shark fin price decline has made it unprofitable. She said blacktip reef sharks are more common in Tam Quang Bac. There are not so many great white sharks, silky sharks or hammerhead sharks, and no guitarfish. We visited her four freezers and she showed us some frozen blacktip fins and said she had frozen hammerhead wet fins at the bottom.

During processing she dries in the sun for a short time and then moves the shark fin indoors to continue the drying process under lights and fans in order to give it a nice shiny golden finish. She can guarantee that no bleach or sulphur is used during processing. Mrs Hue needs seven to ten days depending on the weather to finish ten Kg of processed fins. By weight, a whole set of fins from the same shark is worth more.

Mrs Hue has over a Kg processed fin in her possession that cost 12 and 13 million Dong (USD559 – USD606) per Kg. 12 million dong is for the processed shark fin in a bag, 13 million is for the ornamental shark fin in a box. She can even make an higher grade of ornamental shark fin with more threads for 14 million Dong (USD652) per Kg. She said that presentation is better, even for restaurants. 14 million Dong (USD652) per Kg is the average price that locals can afford. She said she can upgrade the quality for us, but would have to charge a higher price. The top tier at the moment is 22 million Dong (USD1,025) per Kg for 'very thready' shark fin product. The peak price in mid 2013 for top tier was 30 million Dong (1,398) per Kg. The gift culture for local Vietnamese means that shark fin is often used as a bribe in business. Mrs Hue recently sold two Kg of top tier 22 million Dong (USD1,025) per Kg shark fin to her cousin who is the wife of Pham Minh Hac the former Minister of Education. High end buyers do not worry about fakes as purchases made on

referrals with a bond of trust. She buys also dried fins from Mrs Ly, her cousin processor cousin in Qui Nhon, but said her cousin was not good at processing. She maintained that Tam Quang Bac residents have a cultural pride in the town's generations old shark fin industry.  
*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

**02 August 2014 – TAM QUANG BAC, BINH DINH PROVINCE, VIETNAM.  
NGHIA AN / NGHIA PHU, QUANG NGAI PROVINCE, VIETNAM .**

Ex-shark hunter.  
Fishing port.  
Retired fisherman.  
Active shark hunters.

### **EX-SHARK HUNTER**

Mr Thiem is a distant water fisherman. He is a local and grew up in Tam Quang Bac. He has always made his living from the sea. We spoke to Mr Thiem in Tam Quang Bac ship yard. This shipyard builds boats for fishermen in Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh provinces.



A general view of the shipyard at Tam Quang Bac, Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam, 02 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Mr Thiem said he is buying a new distant water fishing boat with the help of the Vietnamese government. He is investing two months of his time and 1.4 to 1.5 billion Dong (USD65,285 – USD69,948) in building the new boat. It will cost Mr Thiem an additional 500 - 600 million Dong (US23,316 – USD27,979) to equip the boat with new fishing gear.

Mr Thiem said he has no choice but to fish as there are no other jobs in Tam Quang Bac. However he feels lucky government policy supports local fishermen. The Vietnamese government has a program to subsidize the fuel costs of the distant water fishing fleet to ensure food security, but also to mark out Vietnam's furthest territorial claims. A new government decree was issued which will

offer low interest loans to build distant water fishing boats. This will begin on 25 August 2014. the loans will be issued by the Bank for Investment and Development of Vietnam (BIDV).

Mr Thiem said that the sea has less fish now. However he is building a new boat in order to target mackerel, not sharks. Mr Thiem's most recent fishing trip was a month ago. On that trip he caught a frilled shark, a '*Ca map than lan*', (*Chlamydoselachus anguineus*). He is now on land to inspect his new boat's construction. Mr Thiem started targeting tuna and mackerels instead of sharks three years ago. From eleven years ago until six years ago he was a shark hunter. Six years ago each shark fishing trip would last for one month and they would catch five to ten tonnes of shark. Now Mr Thiem has changed to targeting other kinds of fish because catching sharks is too difficult, dangerous and unprofitable. So he has changed to hook and line mackerel hunting. The fishing method is different, now they go out to deep water but use lights to catch mackerel with squid as bait.

Some local, and untranslatable, names shark species mentioned by Mr Thiem are; '*Phan*', '*Cao*', '*Xa*' and '*Khoi*'.

There was a big protest on 01 August 2014 due to the Chinese fishing fleet's first day back at sea after the mandatory two (?) months rest period, after which the Vietnamese government Foreign Affairs spokesman made a statement. This is due to the tensions in South China Sea, specifically around the Paracel Islands between Quang Ngai and Hainan.  
*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

### **FISHING PORT**

Quang Ngai is home to Vietnam's distant water fishing fleet.

We visited fishing two fishing ports: Cang Ca Sa Ky and Cang Ca Thinh Hoa.

Cang Ca Sa Ky is a hub for the illegal marine turtle trade. Sea cucumbers were seen drying on the dock at Cang Ca Thinh Hoa. A ports official in Cang Ca Thinh Hoa port said that tuna is now overexploited. Tuna fishing season is from September to January. However, despite South China Sea tensions, the distant water fishing boats are out, and despite overfishing, are being subsidized by the government to go out. The problem is there are not enough fish, so bottom trawling is preferred by many fishermen. The official told us about Tan My commune, an active shark hunting fishing village in Nghia An, near Quang Ngai.

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

### **RETIRED FISHERMAN**

Mr Xiet of Co Luy Nam commune, Nghia An, is now 63 years old. He was a shark hunter when he was young, but he retired three years ago. He used to fish near the Philippines, Malaysia and even way past the Philippines. Now he makes a living making fishing gear. He explained how to catch sharks with bait, hooks and line. He listed the names of some ex-shark hunters and active shark hunters in the area that are still alive; Mr Cao, Mr Trung and Mr Do. They were all professional shark hunters doing the same job as their ancestors, and now their sons are carrying forth the tradition. He told us where we could find them. The active shark hunters not going out right now because it is still typhoon season, but he said they will resume shark hunting in October/November. Some local shark names are; '*Khoi*', '*Co*', '*Bung*', '*Xa*' for big shark species, and '*Tham*', '*En*', '*Nhon*' for small shark species. *Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

## ACTIVE SHARK HUNTERS



Mr Bon Do, ex-shark fisherman is seen in Nghia An, Quang Ngai Province, Vietnam, 02 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

### *Ex-shark hunters of Co Luy Nam, Nghia Phu and Nghia An*

There are four active traditional shark hunting communes in and around Nghia Phu village, Tu Nghia district, Quang Ngai province. Nghia Phu and Nghia An are essentially the same place but Nghia Phu is on the west bank of the river and Nghia An is on the right bank. We visited Co Luy Nam commune in Nghia Phu. Other neighbouring shark hunting communes are Cau commune in Nghia Phu and Tan My commune in Nghia An. The ex-shark hunters place tremendous cultural value on their past as shark hunters. Whilst the shark hunters in the other towns and villages we visited during the investigation have given up in recent years, the shark hunters of Nghia Phu/Nghia An are still continuing out of cultural pride, even though it is not as profitable as in previous years. In the hey-day of shark hunting they could catch more than one hundred sharks per two week , but now they can only catch about thirty to forty on a month long fishing trip.

We met Mr Bon Do, shark hunter, aged 67, who has been retired for five years. He has four sons that are active shark hunters. The hunting season is from October to March. The shark hunters go to the Paracel and Spratly Islands and further to catch sharks. Mr Bon Do hunted sharks for ten years. He said that sharks were abundant until about five years ago, when he began to notice a decline in numbers. In his day they used to catch over one hundred sharks on a two week trip, but now it takes them two weeks to catch thirty to forty sharks. He never used to fish further than the Paracel islands. Sometime the Chinese coast guard used to chase them, but without violence - unlike now. They used to hunt sharks in Vietnam waters until the typhoon season (July onwards), and then they would stay at home. Many years ago they would just cut the shark's fins off and throw the body back in the sea as they had no ice to freeze the shark fins, but now they bring it back to port. The active shark hunters still dry the fins at sea, but now bring back the frozen bodies, or 'logs'.

The call sign of one active shark hunting vessel was recorded in front of Mr Bon Do's house: QN22750. This vessel belongs to Mr Bo Tan, but he also has another boat that he uses for bottom trawling that his sons were fishing on at sea at the time of the interview.

A traditional job passed down for generations, their four sons are still doing it today. The sons were at sea doing bottom-trawling during our visit, and will not go out to catch sharks until the shark hunting season from October to February.

Mr Bon Do said one boat usually has between six to ten crew depending on the size of the boat. The shark fishing fleet hunts together in a group of four or five boats. They have to fish as far away as Philippines and Malaysia as there are no sharks left in Vietnam. He said the Paracel Islands and Spratly Islands are also seeing shark population depletions. He said that sometimes the shark fishing fleet will even go more than 120 nautical miles past the Philippines.



Active shark hunting boats are seen in Nghia An, Quang Ngai Province, Vietnam, 02 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

There are five active shark hunting boats in the commune. Each boat uses 300-500 hooks on a long line. Some local names for shark species traditionally hunted, but unable to find a translation due to the strong spoken dialect accent, include:

Big sharks; 'Cao', 'Bung', 'Khoi', 'Co' - around 300 Kg each.

Medium and small sharks; 'Bong Cac', 'Chuo', 'Noi', 'Tham', 'En' – 30 to 50 Kg each.

'Giong' (guitarfish) is very rare to find.

*It is worth noting that the shark hunters use **dolphin meat** as bait, harpooning the dolphins on the way to the shark hunting grounds. Sometimes the shark hunters also use ray meat as bait. Traditionally they never harm whale sharks as they believe the whale sharks can sink boats if harpooned. Mr Bon Do said the wet fin brokers are local and after collection they sell the fins but he didn't know who they sold the fins to.*



Mr Do Mau, ex-shark fisherman, displays shark fishing gear at his home in Nghia An, Quang Ngai Province, Vietnam, 02 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Another elderly retired shark hunter is Mr Do Mau who is 80 years old. Mr Do Mau's daughter-in-law is called Xanh (Tel: 01674497786). Mr Do Mau also confirmed that the sea used to be abundant with sharks but that it is depleted now. Mr Do Mau showed us some of his fishing gear. Heavy duty stainless steel hooks with steel bait lines.

Mr Den Gio is also an ex-shark hunter who lives nearby. The retired shark hunters were very excited that we could hear their plight and were keen for us to understand too that the overfishing by others had made the sea over-exploited. They said that if their sons hunt nearby it is not profitable, but if they go as far as the Spratly Islands they can still just about turn a profit.

Mr Mau also has four sons who are active shark hunters, but they also catch other kinds of fish for a living because catching sharks is now less profitable. If a single trip is not successful, they can lose over 100 million Dong (USD4,663).

A third retired shark hunter called Dan Nien, aged 75, arrived to join us. His nickname is Lien Xo means 'Soviet Union'. Mr Bon Do, Mr Do Mau and Mr Dan Nien were all captains of their own boats, and used to work together in a group when they were all around 30 to 35 years old.

The Cau commune also has a master shark hunter called Mr Dinh Trung.

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*



Shark fishing gear is seen in the shark hunting village of Nghia An, Quang Ngai Province, Vietnam, 02 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

**03 August 2014 – DA NANG, DA NANG PROVINCE, VIETNAM.  
HANOI, VIETNAM.**

Fishing port.

**FISHING PORT**

*Cang Ca Tho Quang – Da Nang*

This fishing port and market in Da Nang was the busiest fish market witnessed during the investigation. It was very busy from 2am to 4am with many different kinds of marine species observed. Two sharks were seen. Were told by market traders that from October many more kinds of shark can be seen.

1 x 185 Kg shortfin mako shark.

Meat is sold for 70,000 Dong (USD3.26) per Kg  
Price withheld for full set of fins.

1 x 30 Kg blue shark.

Meat is sold for 30,000 Dong (USD1.40) per Kg  
Fins sold for 2.7 million Dong (USD125) per full set of fins.

Shark finning observed on the dock (see image on page 1). We were instructed by port security guard and uniformed coast guard officers to leave the dock area. They said it was OK to visit the fish market, but not the dock, and that taking photos anywhere in the port area - including the market - was not allowed. Was reliably informed that this was in part due to the communist mindset of government officials, but also in order to prevent further scandals in the wake of the Mekong Delta catfish hygiene scandal.

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*



Shark fins are seen in Da Nang fish market, Da Nang Province, Vietnam, 03 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

#### **04 August 2014 – HANOI, VIETNAM.**

Hotel restaurants.

Restaurants.

Markets.

#### **HOTEL RESTAURANTS**

Three hotels in Hanoi were surveyed for shark fin soup.

##### *InterContinental, Hanoi*

No shark fin.

##### *Sheraton Plaza, Hanoi*

No shark fin.

##### *Hanoi Hotel, Hanoi*

This hotel caters mainly for business travelers from Asian countries; Vietnam, Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan.

Executive chef Mr Kam Wing-shing is from Hong Kong.

Shark fin is available at the regular Chinese restaurant called Golden Dragon and also the VIP restaurant next door called 'Dynasty'. Officials are often entertained at the 'Dynasty'.

##### *A) 'Golden Dragon' Restaurant*

Top menu price for shark fin is 660,000 Dong (USD30.78) + 15% tax & service charge per bowl.  
A set menu for eight people including shark fin is available for 1.87 million per person.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vay Ca]**

B) 'Dynasty' Restaurant

Top menu price for (Australian) shark fin is 11.088 million Dong (USD517) for four people +15% tax & service charge per bowl. Hong Kong chef: Kam Wing-shing. *However the top menu item on the menu is not actually shark fin. It is Australian sea lion fin.*

Price is 11.968 million Dong (USD558) for four people +15% tax & service.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vay Ca]**



The image shows a menu board with two items. The top item is 'Súp vây cá sư tử biển tươi Úc tần gà ta (nguyên vây) (260g vây cá)' with a photo of a whole chicken and fish fins, priced at 11,968 /4 pax. The bottom item is 'Súp vây cá sư tử biển tươi Úc (nguyên vây) (60g vây cá)' with a photo of a bowl of soup, priced at 3,300 /pax. The menu board has a black background with yellow and white text.

Item Name	Price
Súp vây cá sư tử biển tươi Úc tần gà ta (nguyên vây) (260g vây cá) Simmered Australian fresh sea lion fin soup with chicken (whole fin)(260g of fin) 本地村雞燉原隻澳洲海虎鮮魚翅260g	11,968 /4 pax
Súp vây cá sư tử biển tươi Úc (nguyên vây) (60g vây cá) Australian fresh sea lion fin soup (whole fin) (60g of fin) 原隻澳洲海虎鮮魚翅60g	3,300 /pax

Fresh Australian sea lion fin soup is seen on the menu at the VIP 'Dynasty' restaurant at the Hanoi Hotel which caters to ethnic Chinese business travellers from Asia; Japan, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, Hanoi, Vietnam, 04 August 2014. PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

**RESTAURANTS**

Yen Sao Restaurant

Near the Cho Dong Xuan Market. This restaurant serves cheap birds nest and cheap shark fin soup to mainland tourists, but there are currently none due to South China Sea tensions.

Top menu price for shark fin is 180,000 Dong (USD8.39) +10% tax & service charge per bowl.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vay Ca]**



An exterior view of the downmarket 'Yen Sao Sai Gon' restaurant in Hanoi which serves bowls of shark fin soup and birds nest soup at knockdown prices to mainland Chinese tourists, Vietnam, 04 August 2014. PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW



A hostess stands next to two massive basking shark fins in the entrance of the expensive 'Nhat Thong' restaurant in Hanoi which also serves endangered wildmeat species such as pangolins, Vietnam, 04 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

### *Nhat Thong Restaurant*

This popular wildmeat restaurant serves endangered pangolins. Porcupines, wild boar, turtles, tortoise, mask palmed civet cat, crocodiles, abalone and birds nest are also on the menu. The restaurant lobby had huge basking shark fins on display inside a glass cabinet by the lifts. Staff told us to delete the photos but we did not.

Top menu price for shark fin is 500,000 Dong (USD23.32) +10% tax & service charge per bowl.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vay Ca]**

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

### *Long Dinh Restaurant*

This is an upscale Hong Kong style restaurant surrounded by government buildings. It is a favourite place for officials to be wined and dined by businessmen. It is common knowledge amongst Hanoi people that a single meal at Long Dinh to treat officials can easily run up a 40 to 50 million Dong (USD1,865 - USD2,332) bill. Had a set of guitarfish fins on display at the entrance.

Top menu price for shark fin is 1.65 million Dong (USD77) +10% tax & service charge per bowl.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vay Ca]**

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

### *San Ho Restaurant*

A seafood restaurant across the road from Long Dinh.

Top menu price for shark fin is 1.2 million Dong (USD56) +10% tax & service charge per bowl.

**[Menu price list in photos – look for Vay Ca]**

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

## MARKET



An exterior view of the Cho Dong Xuan market in Hanoi, Vietnam, 04 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

### Cho Dong Xuan Market

This is the biggest market in Hanoi. It has six kiosks selling shark fin, the same as Saigon. But unlike Saigon, Hanoi's Cho Dong Xuan market also has *unprocessed* shark fin available to buy as well as processed. This would indicate that wholesale traders visit Hanoi, most likely from China to buy unprocessed shark fin in bulk to bring back to China for processing. The traders emphasized that their fins for sale are from both Vietnam and abroad. Australia was mentioned a lot by different traders in the market, and it is worth noting that the shark fin (and sea lion fin) for sale at the Chinese restaurants in the Hanoi Hotel are also from Australia. From our discussions with the shark fin traders in the main market in Hanoi we believe that much shark fin is being imported into Vietnam and then re-exported to China so that mainland Chinese shark fin traders can enjoy a special tax break between China and Vietnam. It is cheaper for China to import from Vietnam than Australia. A long discussion was had with Tinh Nguyet (had a brother who could offer wet fins from Australia: Cuong: Tel: 01228837894) and Thinh Anh who gave lots of information. According to WWF-Hong Kong, Vietnam has become the number one country for shark fin re-exports. Our discussions with the traders in Hanoi market would seem to confirm this. For the above tax reasons, Vietnam has become the back door for shark fins moving into China. It would be worth investigating further, but it would seem logical to say that the supply chain would originate in countries like Australia, then pass through Vietnam's port of Haiphong, and up to Mong Cai on the public bus network and over the border into China.

Trader: *Tam Thu*

Great white shark tails: 4.5 million Dong (USD209) per 900 Kg

Processed shark fin: 500,000 Dong (USD24) per 100 grammes.

Shark fin from Phan Thiet. Trader emphasized his products were good quality and the dry fins are better than the processed fins at other kiosks which he said are sometimes adulterated. He said he could provide as much shark fin as we wanted, large orders.

Trader: *Tinh Nguyet*

Great white shark: Unprocessed tails with cartilage 1.7 million Dong (USD79) per Kg

High quality processed fins 6 million Dong (USD280) per Kg

Processed 5 million Dong (USD233) per Kg.  
(see photo)

Didn't know where shark fin from, but said possibly Nha Trang. She tried to promote Australian shark fins as better quality than Vietnam shark fin. Her brother Cuong flies back and forth between Vietnam and Australia and I spoke to him on the phone. He has been living in Australia for twenty years. As well as wet (frozen) shark fin, he also deals in Australian fresh abalone, lobster and scallops. She said she would need three to four days to get the goods if we placed a deposit with her.

Cuong phone number: 01228837894

Trader: *Thinh Anh*

One set of guitarfish fins; 12 million Dong (USD560) per Kg.

Said the shark fin was from Vietnam, but can get better quality fins from overseas. Her shark fin is a mix of local and imported. She had some guitarfish fins that cost 10 and 12 million Dong (USD466 - USD560) per Kg. She was one of only two market traders selling unprocessed shark fin, see image below.



Unprocessed shark fin is seen for sale at the Cho Dong Xuan market in Hanoi, Vietnam, 04 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

Trader said her guitarfish fins were not from Nha Trang or Binh Dinh, and that she had many international suppliers. She said that her overseas Vietnamese suppliers bring the shark fin into Vietnam in their personal luggage. She said that overseas shark fin, specifically from Australia, was of a better quality. She said 10 to 12 million Dong (USD446 - USD560) per Kg was for genuine shark fin from wild sharks, ie not farmed (?) shark fin. She said that shark fin from great white sharks is the top tier at 12 million Dong (USD560) per Kg. She could guarantee us a stable supply running into hundreds of Kg if our demand was such. She also said could get all different kinds of shark fin. She did not know of any processors in Hanoi. *She said she sells to traders in China frequently and regularly.* Her Chinese trading partners place orders every month. She prepares the shark fin, then packs it and sends it to them via Mong Cai. Her Chinese trading partners supply restaurants in China. She would not disclose the details of the main dealer in Hanoi who supplies the market kiosks. *Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

Another shark fin trader was found in a different area, in Hanoi's Lan Ong street, which is famous for traditional Chinese medicine (TCM):

*Trader: Thanh Binh*

Dealer for 'Sanest' a popular brand of Nha Trang birds nest.

Lowest tier shark fin is from 1.7 million Dong (USD80) per 100 grammes.

Highest tier shark fin is from 2.5 million Dong (USD116) per 100 grammes.

Like the birds nest, shark fin on sale is from Nha Trang.

Refer to undercover recording (5:35 – 6:17) for an interesting conversation overheard in Thanh Binh shop regarding rhino horn verification:

*Lady 2 arrives and opens a paper packet and shows it to the staff in Thanh Binh.*

*Lady 1: "He can help identify if it is fake or genuine."*

*Lady 2: "I've had it checked already by the scientific academy. I've done that before. I had several hundred grammes of rhino horn tested there before. And the fee cost me 1.5 million Dong (USD70) per 100 grammes of rhino horn."*

*Lady 1: "Trust the master, he also can help."*

*Thanh Binh male staff: "It's genuine. I can recognize that from it's appearance right away."*

*Lady 1: "See? 100%!"*

*Lady 2: "Oh it's good. My business partner hunted it and gave me a little bit to for my own self-use."*

*Undercover audio recording available for further info.*

## **05 August 2014 – HANOI, VIETNAM**

Vietnam Government Fisheries official.

Education for Nature Vietnam NGO meeting.

### *Vietnam Government (National Fishery)*

Contacted a Vietnam Government Fisheries official. Mr Curong said he was not available to meet up with me during my time in Vietnam, but would send me a paper by e-mail called:

'Shark\_data\_collection\_situation\_in\_Vietnam', which he duly did.

*Mr Nguyễn Việt Cường (Tel: 091 3038507)*

*Protection and Development of Aquatic Resources Division (National Fishery)*

*No. 10 Nguyen Cong Hoan street, Hanoi.*

*(Số 10 Nguyễn Công Hoan, Hà Nội)*

*E-mail: [cuongmard77@yahoo.com](mailto:cuongmard77@yahoo.com)*

'Education for Nature Vietnam' (ENV) NGO meeting

Met with Quan Nguyen from the ENV enforcement team. Passed info/evidence/photos/audio recordings to Quan on nine wildlife crimes witnessed during the investigation, for ENV's follow up action with Vietnamese government enforcement officials. All were unrelated to sharks. Species of concern in the nine wildlife crimes reports include; marine turtle, pangolin, elephant, monkey and python. Discussed with Quan the Decree 160 which was issued in December 2013. ENV succeeded in getting five species of marine turtle listed. Discussed whether it would be possible to add more marine species to the list. ENV work closely with the Vietnamese government. National Fisheries recently adopted all of ENV recommendations on the aquatic trade.

Quan also mentioned Decree 103, an administrative punishment relating to aquatic species. At present law violators get a fine and confiscation for marine turtle trophies, but not jail.

An English version of Decree 160 and a partially translated version of Decree 103 can be found here:

D160: [http://envietnam.org/images/News\\_Resources/Law\\_library/decree\\_160.pdf](http://envietnam.org/images/News_Resources/Law_library/decree_160.pdf)

D103: [http://envietnam.org/images/News\\_Resources/Law\\_library/Decree\\_103.pdf](http://envietnam.org/images/News_Resources/Law_library/Decree_103.pdf)

Quan also gave me a paper called: 'Decision 82/2008/QĐ-BNN' issued by the Vietnam Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) on 17 July 2008 on the issuance of a list of endangered aquatic species in Vietnam that need protection, rehabilitation and development. To find the sharks on the list search the document for 'Mập', which means 'shark' in Vietnamese.

*Given the dire situation of the guitarfish in Vietnam waters, a listing on CITES Appendix II is recommended.*

**05 August 2014 – SAIGON, VIETNAM.**

Mr Ha, Han Thai.

Referring back to the information provided by Mrs Hue in Tam Quang Bac, we visited the premises of Mr Ha, the big shark fin trader in Saigon. The office address is *Anh Hà, nhà số 59, đường số 6, Phường 11, Quận 6, Saigon, Vietnam*. The outward appearance of the three story house in a residential area is normal. There is a ladder from the third floor leading up to the roof which suggests drying activities are conducted in fine weather. The faded company signboard shows 'Han Thai'. We believe 'Han Thai' to be the second largest shark fin trading company in Vietnam. It is suspected that these premises are just Han Thai's office. A much larger Han Thai warehouse facility must exist somewhere in Saigon.



An exterior shot of the office belonging Mr Ha of 'Han Thai', who is believed to be the second largest shark fin trader in Vietnam, Saigon, Vietnam, 04 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW



An exterior shot of the 'Han Thai' company sign board at the office belonging Mr Ha, who is believed to be the second largest shark fin trader in Vietnam, Saigon, Vietnam, 04 August 2014.  
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## Recommendations

- Vietnam airlines shark fin ban.
- Shipping lines shark fin ban.
- Bus network shark fin ban.
- Work with fisheries to shut down active shark hunting villages of Nghia Phu/Nghia An.
- Shark fin awareness campaigns in every major town.
- Letter campaign to InterContinental Hotel Group.
- Work with ENV on marine species policy.
- Listing of guitarfish on CITES Appendix II.
- A potential follow up investigation to Vietnam could pay attention to:
  - Mong Cai border crossing with China (both sides).
  - Haiphong port.
  - Tam Quang Bac five days before full moon.
  - Follow up on Saigon trader 'Mr Big' from China.
  - Give a camera to Nghia An shark hunters to record their hunting trip.
  - Send photos to shark hunters.
  - Nha Trang luxury shark fin vendors.
- Encourage policy makers in Vietnam to legislate a crackdown on lavish official spending, similar to that of Chinese Premier Xi Jinping's anti corruption drive in China.
- Mainland Chinese student to investigate the XiDi Lu shark fin market in Guangzhou.



Fisherman struggle to survive off yet another meagre catch in the overfished waters off Tam Quang Bac, Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam, 01 August 2014.  
PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX HOFFORD / PEW

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